

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-15 PPT-02 SCA-01 RSR-01 /108 W

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R 240536Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2725

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPACIJ

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 8879

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CB

SUBJECT: GKR EFFORTS TO LIMIT NUMBER OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS

REF: PHNOM PENH 8599

1. LOS ANGELES TIMES CORRESPONDENT JACQUES LESLIE, WHOSE TOURIST VISA IS AMONG THOSE THE GKR REFUSED TO RENEW, HAS BEEN CALLED IN BY THE NATIONAL POLICE, ISSUED AN EXIT VISA AND REQUESTED TO DEPART. HE CLAIMS HE IS A VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATION AND NOTED THAT HIS EXPULSION MIGHT PROMPT ANGRY EDITORIALS AND A DEMARCHE TO SECSTATE FROM HIS NEWSPAPER. HE HAS BALKED AT LEAVING WITHOUT FIRST OBTAINING ASSURANCES THAT HE WILL BE ALLOWED TO RETURN ON A JOURNALISTIC VISA.

2. IN VIEW OF LESLIE'S DIFFICULTY, WE CALLED ON MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER ALL JOURNALISTS ON TOURIST VISAS ARE NOW BEING REQUIRED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. WE WERE ASSURED THAT THIS POLICY IS BEING APPLIED WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, ALTHOUGH A FEW EXCEPTIONS HAVE BEEN GRANTED SUCH AS THE CASE OF WEST
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GERMAN CORRESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A GKR

EMBASSY IN THEIR HOME COUNTRY. INFORMATION OFFICIALS NOTED THAT SEVERAL JOURNALISTS WITH EXPIRED TOURIST VISAS HAVE DEPARTED WITHOUT CAUSING DIFFICULTY. THEY CONFIRMED THAT LESLIE MIGHT APPLY FOR REENTRY UNDER A JOURNALIST VISA AT THE GKR EMBASSY IN BANGKOK AND THAT, AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF A LARGE NEWSPAPER, HE WOULD THEORETICALLY BE ELIGIBLE FOR A VISA. THEY DID NOT, HOWEVER, RULE OUT HIS BEING REFUSED A VISA ON OTHER GROUNDS SUCH AS SENSATIONALIST AND HARMFUL REPORTING. A MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIAL VOLUNTEERED THAT, AFTER OBSERVING LESLIE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, HE REPORTED HIS CONTINUED, ILLEGAL PRESENCE TO THE NATIONAL POLICE.

3. LESLIE ASKED FOR A LETTER FROM THE AMBASSADOR ATTESTING TO HIS BONA FIDES IN ADDITION TO THAT HE NOW POSSESSES SIGNED BY THE PAO. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS INFORMED US, HOWEVER, THAT THIS LETTER WOULD NOT ALTER HIS CASE AND WE HAVE NOT PROVIDED IT. HE ALSO ASKED THAT WE REQUEST ASSURANCES FROM THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION THAT HE WILL BE GRANTED A JOURNALIST VISA TO RETURN TO THE COUNTRY. WE POINTED OUT THAT THIS REQUEST SHOULD PROPERLY COME FROM HIM. WE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED THAT THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAS REFUSED OTHER JOURNALISTS' REQUESTS OF THIS NATURE BUT LESLIE'S REQUEST IS BEING PUT TO THE MINISTER.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE FULLY ALERTED THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OF OUR INTEREST IN THE LESLIE CASE AND OF THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE OF DISCRIMINATORY EXPULSION. THE MINISTRY IS, HOWEVER, UNDERSTANDABLY DETERMINED TO TIGHTEN WHAT HAVE HERETOFORE BEEN VERY LIBERAL PRACTICES REGARDING THE ENTRY OF JOURNALISTS. FOR THIS REASON WE DO NOT PLAN TO PURSUE THE CASE FURTHER AND HAVE ADVISED LESLIE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IMMEDIATELY AND APPLY FOR A JOURNALIST VISA SHOULD THE MINISTER NOT ENTERTAIN HIS REQUEST.
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